CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A system for providing user information to a server computer, comprising:

    a personalization engine within a server computer, comprising:

        an ID generator generating a user ID, in response to a user initiating a session accessing the server computer;

        a banner processor embedding a banner link within a web page to be transmitted from the server computer to the user, the banner link linking to a central computer and including the user ID; and

        a request generator issuing a request to the central computer to provide user information corresponding to the user ID;

    a database of user information indexed by user subscriber numbers;

    a match processor within the central computer receiving the user ID and a user subscriber number, and associating the user ID with the user subscriber number; and

    a database manager retrieving user information from said database for transmission to the server computer, in response to said request generator.

2.   . The system of claim 1 wherein said ID generator comprises a universal unique identifier (UUID) generator.

3.   The system of claim 1 wherein the banner link is a link to a CGI program in the central computer.

4.   The system of claim 1 wherein the user subscriber number is delivered to said match processor from the user's computer within an Internet browser cookie.

5.   The system of claim 1 wherein the user information is formatted as an XML document.

1   6.   The system of claim 1 further comprising a contact mode processor
2   in the central computer for specifying by the user a mode of contact for contacting the
3   user.

1   7.   The system of claim 6 wherein said personalization engine further
2   comprises a user contact processor for sending a message to the user, using the mode
3   of contact specified by the user

1   8.   The system of claim 6 wherein said contact mode processor enables a
2   user to define a set of rules specifying different modes of contact for different types of
3   information.

1   9.   The system of claim 8 wherein said personalization engine further
2   comprises a user contact processor for sending a message to the user, using the set of
3   rules specified by the user.

1   10.   A method for providing user information to a server computer,
     comprising:
2
3   generating a user ID, in response to a user initiating a session
4   accessing a server computer;
5   embedding a banner link within a web page to be transmitted from
6   the server computer to the user, the banner link linking to a central computer and
7   including the user ID;
8   issuing a request to the central computer to provide user information
9   corresponding to the user ID;
10   receiving the user ID and a user subscriber number;
11   associating the user ID with the user subscriber number;
12   retrieving user information from a database of user information
13   indexed by user subscriber numbers, based on the user subscriber number associated
14   with the user ID; and
15   transmitting the user information from the central computer to the
16   server computer, in response to the request.

1   11.   The method of claim 10 wherein said generating a user ID comprises

2   generating a universal unique identifier (UUID).

1   12.   The method of claim 10 wherein the banner link is a link to a CGI

2   program in the central computer.

1   13.   The method of claim 10 wherein said receiving receives the user

2   subscriber number from the user's computer within an Internet browser cookie.

1   14.   The method of claim 10 wherein the user information is formatted as

2   an XML document.

1   15.   The method of claim 10 further comprising specifying by the user a

2   mode of contact for contacting the user.

1   16.   The method of claim 15 further comprising sending a message to the

2   user from the server computer, using the mode of contact specified by the user

1   17.   The method of claim 15 wherein said specifying comprises defining

2   a set of rules specifying different modes of contact for different types of information.

1   18.   The method of claim 17 further comprising sending a message to the

2   user from the server computer, using the set of rules specified by the user.

1   19.   A system for providing user information to a server computer,

2   comprising:

3   an ID generator generating a user ID, in response to a user initiating a

4   session accessing a server computer;

5   a banner processor embedding a banner link within a web page to be

6   transmitted from the server computer to the user, the banner link linking to a central

7   computer and including the user ID; and

8   a request generator issuing a request to the central computer to

9   provide user information corresponding to the user ID.

1   20.   The system of claim 19 wherein the banner link is a link to a CGI

2   program in the central computer.

1   21.   The system of claim 19 further comprising a user contact processor

2   for sending a message to the user via the central computer.

1   22.   A method for providing user information to a server computer,

2   comprising:

3   generating a user ID, in response to a user initiating a session

4   accessing a server computer;

5   embedding a banner link within a web page to be transmitted from

6   the server computer to the user, the banner link linking to a central computer and

7   including the user ID; and

8   issuing a request to the central computer to provide user information

9   corresponding to the user ID.

1   23.   The method of claim 22 wherein the banner link is a link to a CGI

2   program in the central computer.

1   24.   The method of claim 22 further comprising sending a message to the

2   user from the server computer via the central computer.

1   25.   A system for providing user information to a server computer,

2   comprising:

3   a database of user information indexed by user subscriber numbers;

4   a match processor within a central computer receiving a user ID and

5   a user subscriber number from a server computer, and associating the user ID with the

6   user subscriber number; and

7   a database manager retrieving user information about a user from

8   said database in response to a request including the user ID.

1   26.   The system of claim 25 wherein the user subscriber number is

2   delivered to said match processor from a user's computer within an Internet browser

3   cookie.

1   27.   The system of claim 25 wherein the user information is formatted as

2   an XML document.

1   28.   The system of claim 25 further comprising a message manager for

2   directing messages from the server computer to a user having a user subscriber

3   number.

1   29.   A method for providing user information to a server computer,

2   comprising:

3   receiving a user ID and a user subscriber number from a server

4   computer;

5   associating the user ID with the user subscriber number; and

6   transmitting user information about a user from a database of user

7   information indexed by user subscriber numbers, in response to a request including

8   the user ID.

1   30.   The method of claim 29 wherein said receiving receives the user

2   subscriber number from a user's computer within an Internet browser cookie.

1   31.   The method of claim 29 wherein the user information is formatted as

2   an XML document.

1   32.   The method of claim 29 further comprising directing messages from
2   the server computer to a user having a user subscriber number.